## Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 6, 2003

The Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld 1000 Defense Pentagon Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Mr. Secretary,

As we complete this defense authorization bill, we begin looking forward to the next. We are increasingly convinced that we must significantly increase the active duty end strength of the military and reduce the reliance on the Guard and Reserve for those functions that will continue to be needed for the war on terrorism. We believe that we must make these changes starting with the FY 05 budget and the FY 05 Defense Authorization bill.

The war on terrorism is not a crisis; it is a war that will continue indefinitely and it will most certainly define the careers of those currently serving in our armed forces.

The military started this fiscal year 28,000 personnel over authorized levels. According to analysis by the Congressional Budget Office, many troops currently serving in Iraq will begin back-to-back combat tours early next year because there are no units to replace them other than those which have just completed tours in Afghanistan, Bosnia or elsewhere.

During the 1990's, we reduced the size of the Army from 18 Divisions down to 10 while increasing the operational tempo and number of deployments. That pace has increased further since September 11<sup>th</sup> and we do not expect it will abate anytime soon.

We agree with you that it is unlikely that a multinational division will be available to relieve some of our forces in Iraq. As a result, the Pentagon will be alerting thousands more reserve troops for active duty in the coming weeks.

At our Armed Services hearing on September 25<sup>th</sup>, we heard that the Army is "looking hard" at requesting an increase in end strength and suggested that it had not done so in the past because they felt they could not afford it.

Mr. Secretary, we believe we cannot afford not to. We strongly believe that an increase of at least two army divisions is required to fight the war on terrorism and meet our commitments around the world.

The second point that we bring to your attention is the current mix of our Guard, Reserve and Active forces. At our September 25th hearing, General Keane said: "We know the mix is wrong and when we go to war, we're far too dependent on the Reserve component to provide our

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logistical support and some of our other combat support. We've got to fix that. That's number one."

At the height of operations in Iraq there were over 220,000 Guard and Reserve troops on active duty. That number has since fallen to roughly 170,000. Many of these civilian soldiers have been continuously mobilized since September 11<sup>th</sup>. Even after many of these Guard and Reserve forces return home, we will not return to business as usual as we understand it before September 11<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Secretary, every day we read stories about the potential impending loss we could suffer to our Guard and Reserve forces if the current situation is not fixed. The Army Guard is not going to meet its recruitment targets this year. Many of us have served, currently serve or have family and personal friends that serve in the Guard and Reserve. All of us have constituents who serve. Amongst many units there is much talk of leaving the military once their active tours have been completed.

The men and women of our Guard and Reserve can and should be called upon to assist our country in times of crisis on a temporary basis. Many of the units currently serving in Iraq will have served for nearly 15 months, in some cases longer, by the time their tours are finished. We need to send a clear message to members of the Guard and Reserve that help is on the way in the form of more active duty troops, shorter deployment times, and a shift of skills that will be needed continuously in the war on terrorism from the Reserves and Guard to the Active force.

Mr. Secretary, our military needs our help now. We urge you, with our full support, to take strong, meaningful action to move towards alleviating the problems that we have mentioned.

Sincerely,

Helly Hart

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